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of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. These alignments are intended to bring managerial focus within the Department of Defense to provide technical and tactical leverage over the Soviets. Competitive Strategies are a management tool which develops innovative U.S. military capabilities in both weapons systems and operational concepts. These innovations support the formulation of U.S. national defense policy and assist the Department of Defense and Congress in making defense procurement decisions. This paper examines the concept of Competitive Strategies and analyzes its application within the Department of Defense focusing on its impact on weapons procurement, possible Soviet reaction, and the chances for institutionalization beyond the current administration.

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COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

An Individual Essay

by

Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Davis, AD

Professor Gary L. Guertner
Project Adviser

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US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
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ABSTRACT

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The concept of Competitive Strategies was ushered to the forefront of American defense policy by Secretary of Defense Weinberger in his FY 1987 Annual Report to Congress. This concept views technology as an element of national power which can be exploited through "thoughtful and systematic ways to cause the Soviets to compete less efficiently or less effectively in areas of military application." These strategies are a means by which enduring strengths of the United States and its allies can be aligned against enduring weaknesses of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. These alignments are intended to bring managerial focus within the Department of Defense to provide technical and tactical leverage over the Soviets. Competitive Strategies are a management tool which develops innovative U.S. military capabilities in both weapons systems and operational concepts. These innovations support the formulation of U.S. national defense policy and assist the Department of Defense and Congress in making defense procurement decisions. This paper examines the concept of Competitive Strategies and analyzes its application within the Department of Defense focusing on its impact on weapons procurement, possible Soviet reaction, and the chances for institutionalization beyond the current administration.



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Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger introduced the concept of competitive strategies in his FY87 Annual Report as one of the basic tenets of United States defense policy.

In what follows, I outline four pillars in the defense policy by which we seek to achieve a more stable deterrence for the 1990s and beyond. These four pillars are: SDI and secure nuclear deterrence; uses of force and secure conventional deterrence; a strategy for reducing and controlling arms; and competitive strategies for deterrence.¹

SDI, nuclear and conventional deterrence, and arms control were familiar strategic threads woven into our defense policy by the Reagan administration but "competitive strategies" was new and perhaps even novel having almost no advance ad work by the Department of Defense.² Competitive Strategies caste a long shadow over nearly every aspect of U.S. defense planning. In Secretary Weinberger's words,

Implementation of our overarching strategy of secure deterrence requires an array of competitive strategies that capitalize on our advantages and exploit our adversaries' weaknesses. In the long-term military competition with the Soviet Union, we must become more competitive.³

Weinberger goes on to further define the spectrum of the competition.

Competitive strategies require directing research and development (R&D) and procurement programs, adapting doctrine and concepts of operation, and changing organizations to exploit our comparative advantages.

They mean a greater attention to the timing and phasing of U.S. initiatives, for example, introduction of new weapons or major modifications of weapons or tactics. A management strategy for competing in a particular area will have to provide for flexibility and adaptation to rapid changes in the environment and future Soviet actions.⁴

A year of refining the definition of competitive strategies brings perhaps a sharper focus in his FY88 Annual Report" aligning enduring American strengths against enduring Soviet weaknesses. Even within their strengths we should seek weaknesses--chinks in their armor--that we can exploit, thereby rendering Soviet military power less potent over time. By adopting competitive strategies we force the Soviets to perform less efficiently or effectively."⁵ Secretary Weinberger argues the necessity and practicality of such a strategy with three propositions. First, the Soviet investment in all areas of military development far exceeds ours and can be expected to continue in this relative position. Second, the United States must maintain an effective deterrent force within a constrained budget, we cannot match the Soviets plane for plane, ship for ship and tank for tank. Third, as we enter a period of rapid technological growth, we have a greater capacity to exploit these technologies in the development and manufacture of war materials, thus giving us the ability to successfully develop

strategies for competing more effectively in selected areas. The thrust of these strategies is not only to attack Soviet weakness but to produce concomitant benefits, thus rendering current Soviet weapons, technology, and doctrine obsolete or far less effective. This will force Soviet diversion of resources into areas more defensive in nature and therefore less threatening, (a reactive vice proactive posture). It will also cause a difficult to support spiraling increase in financial expenditures and diversion of technological and industrial efforts to military applications during Gorbachev's period of "Peristroika".

Examples of competitive strategies are omnipresent within the Department of Defense. Low observable (stealth) technology is at the cutting edge with the potential to render much of the Soviet huge investment in air defense obsolete and cause the Soviets to direct resources toward defensive forces in combating the technology. Other examples include anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) technology, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), the Advanced Technology Bomber (ATB), the Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF), and the Advanced Cruise Missile (ACM). To arm these new systems, a host of smart munitions are being designed; and, to effectively employ them, doctrinal evolutions such as Airland Battle and Airland Battle Future are being developed by the Services.

All of these are certainly not new but conveniently fill the mold formed under the rubric of competitive strategies. This has caused many to cry this is a mere vogue slogan in which to wrap expensive weapon packages before the austere eye of Congress and, in fact, it may well be; although, at the same time, it must be viewed as a new management tool. A tool for military strategy formulation within the Department of Defense which shows promise to be an enduring legacy of the Reagan Administration and may well revolutionize strategic military thinking into the twenty-first century. The arrival of this "plan" has come not a minute too late as we begin to move through what appears to be lean defense dollar years using a bureautic program development system which appeases parochial Services with their fair share of the defense dollar. This is a system which accords little central focus or priority to guide the output of the vast technological harvest we shall reap during the next 20-30 years. Edward Luttwak, Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies, views this system of appeasement of Service interests this way: "We see the loot shared out according to inherited priorities, with scant regard to all the vast changes that have so greatly diminished the value of some forces, while increasing the value of others."⁶ Have we, in fact, fallen victim to the result of an unintentional Soviet competitive strategy play due to a "resistance to change" inherent in our military program system?

Are competitive strategies a fundamental change in defense doctrine brought on by a truly new idea? It would appear not. In concept, military thinkers have for centuries professed the merits of studying ones enemy to identify and exploit strengths and weaknesses. Sun Tzu may have been thinking in terms of competitive strategies in the fourth century BC when he said: "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril."⁷ More recently, Captain George Edward Thibault, USN, made the following statement in the basic strategy textbook of the National War College." [A commander] judges his capabilities, assesses his risks, and decides how to make the most of his strengths, compensate for his weaknesses, undermine the enemy's strengths, and take advantage of enemy weaknesses to gain his objective."⁸

The genesis of the current Weinberger strategy appears to have its foundation in some theoretical work performed in the 1960s by former Rand Corporation analyst Andrew W. Marshall⁹, now the Director of Net Assessment for the Pentagon. The concept also has roots in the business management strategy of the same name, it has long been considered a good business practice to study competitors and capitalize on their weaknesses in the marketplace.

Secretary Weinberger's strong commitment to the concept is evident in his declaring competitive strategies as a major theme of the Department of Defense for the remainder of the

Reagan Administration and in his extraordinary measures to institutionalize the process. The strategy must be viewed as a long term iterative process in which the likely Soviet's response to our initiatives must be evaluated and our counter-responses or counterinitiatives conceptualized. As this iterative process evolves, the synergistic family of weapons, doctrine, and operational concepts must also be evaluated and aligned to support the strategy. In effect, we are looking well into the future beyond our current initiatives, and must develop an institutional audit trail to fully capitalize on the byproducts of such a management system. For the system to be functional, it must also be an integral part of the Department of Defense's Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS). This necessitates not only involvement at the office of Secretary of Defense level but involvement at the Service and Unified and Specified Command level. Finally, it must also be managed at the mission and specific technology level.

To institutionalize the competitive strategies process, Secretary Weinberger directed that a formal structure be developed. To fully appreciate the strength of commitment to competitive strategies and its potential for revolutionary change, an understanding of the structure and process methodology is necessary. The Competitive Strategies Council is the overriding body chaired by the Secretary of Defense.

Membership includes the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Service Secretaries, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the four Service Chiefs of Staff, the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy and for Acquisition, the Directors of the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Chairman of the Competitive Strategies Steering Group. The Council provides guidance, approves candidates for Competitive Strategy consideration and sets priorities for implementation of selected strategies. Subordinate to the Council is the Competitive Strategies Steering Group chaired by the Special Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Defense. Membership consists of representatives from the Service Secretaries, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Services, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, the Director of Net Assessment, the Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation, and the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. This Steering Group's functions are to establish candidate Competitive Strategy Task Forces, direct the efforts of those task forces, and make recommendations to the Council based on task force findings. The heart of the process is the Competitive Strategies Task Force which is an interdepartmental group formed for a short period, normally 90 days, to develop specific candidate strategies. The task force effort is based upon terms of reference, or guidelines, and its progress is periodically

reviewed by the Steering Group. Department offices, agencies, the Joint Staff and the Services all provide experts to examine the issues that are selected by the Council. Finally, to support the Council and the Competitive Strategies concept, a Senior Intelligence Committee was created. The Committee is chaired by the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and is composed of the Director of the National Security Agency, the four Service Intelligence Chiefs, and the Director of the Intelligence Community Staff. Subordinate to this Committee is an interagency intelligence working group to provide assistance to the Steering Group and Task Forces.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Competitive Strategies Task Force planning process is its methodology. Once a candidate strategy or area for consideration is selected by the steering group and approved by the Council, a task force is convened to examine and develop the area of interest. The methodology employs a chess match analysis in which United States strengths are aligned against Soviet weaknesses in a move-response-counterresponse sequence. As this chess match analysis progresses, another cost imposing strategy known as leverage is applied. Leverage is a strategy of scale which involves multiplying the return on one's own investment by maximizing the cost of responding by that adversary, including cost imposed by stressing an

adversary's industrial, technological, or military system. Leverage also addresses directional matters in that it seeks to move an adversary down a desired (or at least a less undesirable) path.¹⁰ The analytical process begins with the identification of specific areas of potential high leverage which will result in an improved military capability. These leverage points become the focus for the development of initiatives which are applied to those specific cases in which we think we have, or can develop, a significant military advantage. Against those initiatives we project what the Soviet response might be and, given those responses, we then consider various United States counter responses to the Soviet action. By continuing through the move--countermove analysis, we obtain a sense of how enduring the United States advantages would be, as well as identify a range of likely Soviet responses in order to position ourselves to counter them. This type of evaluation helps to ensure that any initiative adopted would gain and maintain a significant military advantage in the long-term, in spite of what the Soviets might do. Once a candidate system or operational concept completes the task force evaluation process it must undergo an exhaustive implementation review prior to consideration for implementation.¹¹

To date one task force has been convened, a test bed designed to shake out the concept while focusing on a key area of critical concern. The scenario was a mid-to-high intensity global conventional war with the focus being the European theater. An extremely topical orientation due to the strategic importance of Europe, our strong forward deployed posture, and the growing prospects of arms reductions in the theater. The task force, using the Competitive Strategies methodology, keyed on Soviet command and control procedures, air and ground penetration techniques, and the Soviets high-operations tempo with its associated time management requirements. Simultaneously, the task force drew from NATO strengths in the area of data automation and processing, target acquisition, and intelligence fusion and dissemination. The task force methodology employed in-place systems, current five year defense program systems, and conceptual enhancements possible through new technologies. Four major initiatives emerged from this study: countering Soviet air operations, countering Soviet penetration of NATO forward defenses, stressing of the Warsaw Pact troop control system, and countering Soviet global and multitheater operations. These initiatives make maximum use of improved military capabilities in the areas of unmanned systems, area munitions, extended range projectiles, smart submunitions, rapidly emplaceable

barriers. The initiatives also take advantage of advanced technologies in the area of low-observables, automatic data processing and electronic miniaturization.¹² These initiatives have been approved by the Secretary of Defense for further analysis within the implementation review process. This entails wargaming force packages and operational concepts using computer assisted exercises to achieve initial validation. Further refinement and definition of notional forces will be affected by the office of Net Assessment which should produce concrete fundable programs to be entered into the PPBS cycle.

Competitive Strategies appear to be a viable management system with which to engage the Soviets in a battle of strategy formulation and development. It is a well thought out and sound methodology which will maximize our defense dollars through the application of leverage at critical junctures as technology evolves, rather than random opportunistic application. Two of the more critical questions facing this concept are: can Competitive Strategies be institutionalized in the long-term within the Department of Defense, and, how will the Soviets respond to this defense policy management procedure?

Institutionalization has bounded the first hurdle of resistance through the high level formal structure created within the Department. Secretary Weinberger was wise in

actively involving his position as the chairman and major arbitrator of the system. The torch has been passed to Secretary Carlucci who has strongly endorsed the concept and, to further ensure compliance, has created a special oversight group that includes Under Secretary Dennis Kloske and Director of Program Analysis and Evaluation David Chu. Their charter is to monitor budgetary decisions by the Services to see that competitive strategy programs are protected.¹³ This oversight group is a cause celebre for the internal resistance to institutionalization, that resistance coming from the Services themselves. Although top military leaders have come on board and supported Competitive Strategies, there is a growing concern that the Competitive Strategies approach may take precedence over the current budget making process. That this process might override the broad policy guidance now provided by the Secretary and abrogate some of the Services right to prioritize and select their programs is a valid concern, but when viewed from the perspective of this centralized priority setting, it appears to better meet the military principal of "objective." The appellate process will continue to serve the system in the form of the Defense Resources Board where Services may plead their arguments.

Another concern to the Services is the focus of candidates. The first candidate was concentrated on NATO land and air power, leaving the Navy suspect for neglect in

the next budget cycle at the expense of the Army and Air Force. This focus also raises the question of spectrum; is the theater focus of the first study an indicator that we are to lose the broad global perspective? Defense proponents argue not. They say that the initial study was a calibration exercise and because of the strategic importance of Europe, the well known relative balance of powers, and the useful data to be gained for defining post INF treaty conventional force requirements, it was a critical choice to examine.

The second hurdle to institutionalization is infusion. Involvement of other governmental agencies, the Congress and even private industry will provide connectivity to aid in the survival of Competitive Strategies. Infusion will also assist Competitive Strategies through the upcoming administration change, which may well be its most vulnerable period. Infusion within the Congress will pay the greatest dividends appearing exploitable as an answer to continual Congressional criticisms in the areas of defense policy formulation, expenditures of defense budget dollars, and a growing concern for jointness. All of these issues can be addressed by the application of Competitive Strategy management within the Defense Department.

Secretary Weinberger and now Carlucci have also been espousing Competitive Strategies in the Congressional arena. An indicator of interest is evident in four provisions of

Senator Dan Quayle (R. Ind) in the 1988 Defense Authorization Bill passed by the Senate Armed Services Committee.

A requirement attached to these provisions was that the Secretary submit a report on Competitive Strategies to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees by 15 Jan 1988.¹⁴ Another indicator of infusion appears in a report of the Democratic Leadership Council which will provide input for the party's defense platform, the report states a need for "a military strategy that plays to Western strengths and exploits Soviet weaknesses."¹⁵

This drawing in of Congress to the fold of Competitive Strategies is absolutely necessary. It must be interwoven into the budget developing and Congressional hearing process to demonstrate a clearly focused consensus among Services, and between military and civilian components of the Department. This to articulate a defensible, integrated military strategy. Clearly hard questions must be addressed to bring about this consensus.

Institutionalization also gains momentum from the private industrial sector. Certainly industry exists as the primary base for defense technology. Perhaps our highest trump card in the competition with our Soviet adversaries lies in this industrial technology base and, in order to maximize Competitive Strategies industry must play an active role; a role not only in exploiting technology but in molding

that technology to meet the objectives of Competitive Strategies. A dialog must be established to seed both strategist and scientist in the mutual development and military harnessing of technology. Industry must be included in the Competitive Strategies process at every step, not as a post facto "can we do it" consultant, but as a full participant as the methodology proceeds from the point of candidate selection. Industry is hesitant to jump on board at this time as they wait to see whether it be a passing theme to die with the current Administration. The Department of Defense must take the lead and begin demanding support from industry. Services must require contractors to conceptualize Soviet response to proposed weapon systems. The Defense Department must bring contractors into the methodology process to force their thinking in terms of our adversaries. Industry needs to expand their knowledge of Soviet military thinking.

Institutionalization must also encompass our Allies. A global, western approach is necessary to capture the full scope of emerging technologies and ensure a degree of Alliance-wide compatability and prioritization. Standardization has long been a theme within the NATO Alliance, but the added dimension of technological exploitation must be addressed. To fully benefit from the Competitive Strategies methodology, the leveraging points and timing are critical in

eliciting the desired Soviet response; and therefore demands implementation of the strategies be well orchestrated, coordinated, and timed. This is a difficult area to tread, with growing concerns over technology transfer and the "NO-FORN" classification associated with many of our candidate programs. Procedures to transcend these barriers must be built into an Alliance framework for Competitive Strategies. To a great extent, Soviet knowledge of intent and technology may not help keep them from following the course we have laid for them.

There are far more measures to be taken in an attempt to fully implant Competitive Strategies as an enduring aspect of our defense policy formulation apparatus. Jon Englund, Managing Editor of Defense Media Review has proposed five steps to further the objective of institutionalization:¹⁶

- ° Assigning the National Security Council a policy and budget role in the Competitive Strategy structure.

- ° Development of a Pentagon Competitive Strategies working group staffed by representatives from the Under Secretary for Acquisition, the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Commanders-in-Chiefs (CINCs), Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Net Assessment Office and the Under Secretary for Policy.

- ° Mandating that strategic justification be tied to high-priority items within the defense budget.

° The development of a supplemental Competitive Strategies budget.

° Creation of institutional arrangements within NATO to review Competitive Strategies. These are prudent steps which would create depth in the consensus so necessary to ensure a viable course for Competitive Strategies. A course which will, by its nature, have a long term impact on both United States and Soviet strategy decisions.

What the Soviet response to Competitive Strategies will be is a question clouded by many issues. It is generally accepted that the United States and its Western Allies hold the lead in technological competition with the Soviet Union, but the relative longer developmental time in placing our technologies on the battlefield coupled with our inability to prevent technology transfer to the Soviet Union abrogates this advantage to a great extent. The United States also tends to become enmeshed in technology and dueling Soviet numbers with Western superior quality, only to lose sight of the duel in strategic and operational thinking. The United States must ensure that our technology is applied with considerable thought as to where we and the Soviets are going in this critical area of strategic and operational thinking.

The view of technological exploitation may also be changing in the Soviet military hierarchy. Indicators in recent years are that a shift from quantity to quality and

efficiency is occurring. These changes may be in part due to the on-going restructuring and drive for better use of resources, but are also evidence of a less naive Soviet approach to the burgeoning technological world. The appointment of Ustinov, a civilian expert on arms development and production, as Minister of Defense, and Ogarkov, an operation research techniques expert, as Chief of the General Staff point in this direction. Although both have since been replaced, they were symptomatic of the Soviet concern for their position of inferiority in the race with the West to field quality state of the art weapon systems. Another issue clouding Soviet response is the arms negotiations wave now in vogue. The Soviets have played a better hand at this game and appear to have a receptive Western audience to the type proposals they might be prepared to make which could offset gains achieved through Competitive Strategies. There is also no assurance the Soviets will readily travel the course we envision through implementation of our competitive strategies. The desired outcome of a Competitive Strategy is for the opponent to counter with a symmetrical response, e.g., to develop and deploy an analogous weapon system. The Soviets appear unwilling to follow this recipe and have openly discussed the United States' "Competitive Strategies

Doctrine" in military and political publications. The following is translated from a December 1987 Soviet periodical:¹⁷

First, a symmetrical response frequently means that a side which adopts it is doomed to backwardness in the arms race. Moreover, as contemporary weapons become more complicated and the time taken to develop, test, and deploy them becomes longer, this lag may even increase.

Second, a symmetrical response presupposes that the side that initiates a new round of the arms race can make maximum use of the technological, geostrategic, and other advantages at its disposal. The other side is compelled to conduct military competition "on the opponent's field" and "according to his rules." Therefore, the costs of the arms race (economic, political, and others) for it are very often more substantial than for the initiator country.

After lengthy discussion the authors cite an historical example:

Historical experience shows that an asymmetrical response not only makes it possible to avoid the above negative consequences but also creates very complex problems for the country that initiated the arms race. For instance, in the fifties the United States persistently sought to force the Soviet Union to compete with it in building strategic bombers, counting on the fact that geostrategic advantages (primarily the existence of a dense network of bases along the perimeter of USSR territory), as well as America's technological and industrial superiority, would enable Washington to dictate the terms in this competition. The USSR's asymmetrical response--the accelerated development of intercontinental ballistic missiles--was a very unpleasant surprise for the United States and forced it to review many traditional notions about military strategy.

The creation of ICBM's was the main factor that ensured that the Soviet Union achieved military-strategic parity with the United States in a historically short period of time.

Competitive Strategies viewed as a management tool and not as an overall grand strategy to defeat the Soviet Union, is a timely compliment to the current Department of Defense Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System. The necessity for such a system is evident through the rapidly expanding pace of technology today, and the need for priority and focus in the harnessing of these technologies for military application. We have a need for such a system to provide an innovative, long-term view of our national defense. Edward Luttwak, an oftentime critic of the Pentagon, put it succinctly: "there are among the 35,000 working in the Pentagon at least six who are actually thinking about how to make the US stronger. [Competitive Strategies] was born genuine; the last thing on their mind was public relations. We have been doing our own thing and not looking at the enemy. The simple concept of it is that of maneuver: don't hit the enemy where he is strong, but where he is weak."¹⁸

END NOTES

1. Casper W. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress Fiscal Year 1987, p. 73.
2. The concept had been around for many years within the Department of Defense but not defined under the rubric of Competitive Strategies prior to Secretary Weinberger's Report.
3. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress Fiscal Year 1987, p. 85.
4. Ibid.
5. Caspar W. Weinberger, Annual Report to the Congress Fiscal Year 1988, p. 66.
6. David C. Morrison, "The Rush to Fill a Strategy Vacuum", National Journal, 11 July 1987, p. 1802.
7. Samual B. Griffith, Zun Tzu: The Art of War, p. 84.
8. George Edward Thibault, The Art and Practice of Military Strategy, p. 1.
9. Morrison, p. 1802.
10. Andrew W. Hull, Cost Imposing Strategies, Betac Corporation, 15 July 1983.
11. The description of Competitive Strategies to include the structure and methodology is taken from a briefing prepared by the Competitive Strategies Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense.
12. The Task Force report is classified SECRET although an unclassified version of the after action report is included in the 15 January 1988 Secretary of Defense Report on Competitive Strategies to Congress. A synopsis is also included on p. 116 of Secretary of Defense Carlucci's FY89 Annual Report to Congress.
13. Dan Beyers, "New Priorities Plan May Cost Navy." Defense News, 29 February 1988, p. 3.
14. Jon Englund, "The Doctrine of Competitive Strategies," Strategic Review, Summer 1987, p. 70.

15. Englund, p. 70.
16. Englund, P. 70.
17. Karaganov S.A., A.V. Kortunov, and V.V. Zhurkin,
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Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya, 12 December 1987,
p. 4. (Transulation Source FBIS-SOV-87-245,
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18. Morrison, p. 1803.

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14. Hull, Andrew W. "Cost Imposing Strategies." Betac Corporation, 15 July 1983, pp. 1-38.
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